

Update to Legislative Policy Guidelines for Elections and Voting

As the County of Los Angeles (County) celebrates the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Act), it is important that the Board of Supervisors (Board) improve and modernize continually the voting process in ways that ensures compliance with the spirit and intent of the Act.

There is a heightened level of interest and activity trending across the State of California surrounding legislation with a strong emphasis on decreasing administrative barriers to voting, modernizing voting systems and increasing voter participation.

It is essential that the Interim Chief Executive Officer and the County’s advocates in Sacramento have the appropriate authority to support or oppose proposals and to offer input into final language that will affect voting and elections administration in the nation’s largest local elections jurisdiction.

The existing policies surrounding voting and elections in the Board’s Legislative Agenda are not adequate to appropriately address the rapidly-changing landscape of election reform being considered by the Legislature. Adding new policy guidelines will make

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advocacy in the elections and voting arena more poignant both during this current session and in the future.

Additionally, the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) is actively engaged in its Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP), which will ultimately lead to the development and implementation of the County's new voting system and a modernized voting experience offered to the electorate. The RR/CC is working to enhance the entire voting experience and remove impediments to the voting process while encouraging increased participation. Many important facets of this enhanced initiative are limited by current regulations and Elections Code provisions.

The design and future implementation of VSAP is of vital importance to the County and the entire process is being observed across the State and nation. The County needs to be able to advocate in a timely manner on bills that seek to improve both voter turnout and the election processes and procedures.

There are significant areas in the voting and elections arena where the Board's current policy agenda is silent. The following are policy areas that should be added to the agenda if the County seeks to effectively advocate on current and upcoming proposals:

- The secure and effective use of new technologies in the field of election administration;
- The implementation of additional, expanded and alternative voting opportunities;
and
- The effective execution of state-mandated changes in the elections process.

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These important additions will allow the County and its advocates to actively support legislation seeking to increase voter turnout and to modernize and improve the election processes and procedures, and to ensure that the unique issues and needs of the County are considered.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Approve the following additions to existing Board-adopted policies and positions relating to Section 3.15 - Elections and Voting for inclusion in the 2015-16 State Legislative Agenda.
 - 3.15.5 - Support legislation to allow for the secure and effective use of new technologies available in the field of election administration;
 - 3.15.6 - Support legislation to authorize the implementation of additional, expanded and alternative voting opportunities; and
 - 3.15.7 - Support legislation to assist counties in the effective implementation of state-mandated changes in the elections process and administration.
2. Instruct the Interim Chief Executive Officer and the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to work with the Los Angeles County delegation, other counties and local governments, and stakeholders to pursue these policies, positions, and priorities in the State Legislature and with the State Administration and its agencies.

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